

Mr. Speaker, finding solutions to making housing more affordable for our constituents, especially the most vulnerable, is a priority of mine here in Congress. I am proud to stand with Mr. TIBERI of Ohio and over 70 bipartisan Members to support his efforts to reform and strengthen low-income housing tax credits. It is time for Congress to work towards responsible solutions and make the rental affordability crisis a priority.

#### PASSAGE OF SANCTIONS PACKAGE

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the passage of sanctions against the Iranian, Russian, and North Korean regimes. This package of sanctions sends a strong message to these regimes that the United States will not tolerate their rogue actions.

These sanctions will hold accountable those involved in the Iranian regime's ballistic missile program, those who attempt to destabilize the region and threaten Israel, as well as those responsible for Iran's ongoing human rights abuses. The legislation also sets us on a path to deter conventional Iranian activities in the region and imposes sanctions on any individual that contributes to Iran's ballistic missiles or to terrorism.

The sanctions against North Korea will respond to its increasingly hostile threats against the United States and our allies in Asia. By increasing the President's authority to impose sanctions on persons in violation of United National Security Council resolutions regarding North Korea, we are ensuring action can be taken swiftly when necessary.

Last, but certainly not least, we have strengthened sanctions against Russia in response to cyber attacks and interference in Ukraine. Specifically, we are increasing sanctions on human rights abusers, those who supply weapons to the Assad regime in Syria, and those conducting cyber activity on behalf of the Russian Government.

Given the seriousness of Russia's aggression, we are strengthening the existing sanctions contained in executive orders on Russia and mandating a congressional review if any sanctions are relaxed, suspended, or terminated. I strongly encourage the President to sign this bill into law and will continue to impress upon all of my colleagues the need to not treat Russia lightly.

These threats posed to our national security by Iran, Russia, and North Korea cannot be understated. With passage of this sanctions package, Congress is doing its job to ensure they will be held accountable.

#### SALUTING THE FIREFIGHTERS AND AGENCIES OF CAL FIRE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saluting the more

than 5,000 firefighters from 40 cooperating agencies that assembled under the coordination of CAL FIRE to battle the Detwiler fire that threatened Yosemite Valley and its gateway communities.

I spent Saturday at the command centers in Mariposa and Merced Counties, and what I said is what I have seen time and again at so many fires we are having these days in the Sierras: cool, calm professionalism; selflessness; and devotion to duty.

□ 1115

CAL FIRE is an agency that works. I want particularly to salute and thank Nancy Koerperich, CAL FIRE's unit fire chief for Madera, Merced, and Mariposa. She and her operation literally saved several towns, including Mariposa and Coulterville, from annihilation last week.

Sheriff Doug Binnewies of Mariposa County is rightly being hailed for his courage and leadership in directing the orderly evacuation of the town of Mariposa as the fire bore down upon it.

You can literally see how the fire burned right up to the town's edge. I can't tell you how many homes I saw where firefighters stopped it literally within a few feet of their front doors. CAL FIRE Battalion Chief Jeremy Rahn told me that the difference between saving and losing so many homes was defensible space.

CAL FIRE has produced a superb phone app to assist homeowners in preparing their homes so that if, God forbid, the need arises, firefighters will be able to defend them. It also provides fire alerts, and anyone in the mountain community should have it. It is free for downloading at your phone's app store.

I cannot say enough about the firefighters who have been working in triple-digit heat on 24-hour shifts to battle the flames or the air crews that dropped a staggering 500,000 gallons of fire retardant in a single day at the height of the conflagration. Their effectiveness can be seen by red borders of fire retardant that separate the blackened ground of the fire on one side from the landscape they saved on the other.

They not only saved these communities and hundreds of homes, they also stopped the fire within just a few miles of the Stanislaus National Forest, a forest that is dying because of Federal environmental restrictions on forest management. The firefighters warned that, if the fire had reached these vast stands of dead trees, the fire would have exploded with atomic force. And that is the fine point of the matter.

I spoke with Mariposa County Supervisor Marshall Long and many of the other firefighters at the Mariposa command center, and the one thing that they stressed time and again is that they need relief from the regulations that are making it almost impossible to create firebreaks, thin the forests, or remove the excess fuels.

These policies, imposed 45 years ago through legislation like the National

Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act, promised to improve the forest environment. After 45 years of experience with these laws, I think we are entitled to ask: Well, how is the forest environment doing? The answer is damning. These laws have made it virtually impossible to keep our forests properly managed, and the result has been severe tree overcrowding.

The Sierra Nevada normally support between 20 and 100 trees per acre, depending upon the topography. The average tree density is now 266 trees per acre. This extreme overcrowding has stressed the trees to the point they can no longer resist drought and beetle infestation and disease. This has caused a massive tree die-off, and we have entire national forests now just waiting to explode with over 100 million dead trees.

The heroic firefighters of the Detwiler fire have kept it out of these hazard zones, but the hazard zones are still there. And consider this: we are only at the very beginning of the fire season that combines fresh brush from last year's rains with millions of dead trees that were too stressed from overcrowding to survive the drought. The firefighters I spoke with on Saturday bitterly complained that they can't even cut firebreaks to isolate these zones because of the same so-called environmental laws.

The House has pending before it the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017 that would allow us to restore good forest management, but we may already have run afoul of what Churchill called history's "terrible, chilling words: too late."

Mr. Speaker, I call for expeditious consideration of the Resilient Federal Forests Act and other legislation aimed at restoring management to our forests in the hope that firefighters can hold these fires at bay until we restore good management to our public lands.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CURBELO of Florida). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 19 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

#### PRAYER

Reverend William D. Johnson, Jr., Harbour Lake Baptist Church, Goose Creek, South Carolina, offered the following prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for the day that You have bestowed upon us. May our actions glorify You